

**young hearts fade**

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## young hearts fade by ivorysteel

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**Summary:**

Richie's worst fear isn't clowns. They're a close second but there's something he dreads more than that.

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### Author's Note:

reddie will be the death of me. there aren't enough  
fics

“What are you scared of, Richie?”

Richie blinked, surprised by the question. He'd been thinking of it himself, thinking about the others and their fears. A terrible memory of a fire, a dead brother, blood, the creepy woman in a painting. They were all justifiable horrors, normal nightmares for kids. But the thing was: nothing had happened to Richie. He didn't have a horrible life story, he didn't have a dead relative, he didn't mind blood and gore, he thought creepy things were kinda cool. They weren't the kind of things he had nightmares about.

The thing he did have nightmares about was sitting in front of him, frowning at him, waiting for an answer.

“I'm scared of what's between Eddie's mom's legs,” Richie replied and Eddie flushed an angry red.

“Shut *up*, Richie,” Eddie said and the others rolled their eyes and groaned.

“I'd b-better be going,” Bill said and walked off to collect Silver. Once their leader was gone, the gang dispersed quickly, soon leaving only Richie and Eddie sitting on the grass and watching the show.

“What are you really scared of, Richie?”

“I don't like clowns,” Richie said, grimacing as the clown on the stage pranced around.

“You *are* a clown.”

“But you love me.”

Eddie smiled and carried on watching the show. Richie watched

him and remembered his experience with the clown. The one he'd not told the others, except Bev who had forced it out of him one day in the Barrens.

*It had been a few days after the end of school. Richie was home alone, just about to head out to the Barrens where he was meeting Bill, Eddie and Stanley, when he heard the cry. It was unmistakable, who it was. He knew Eddie's voice and all the different pitches and meanings and that was a cry of pain. That was 'Richie-you-stood-on-my-foot' pain. But a hundred times worse.*

*Richie's heart hammered against his ribcage as he ran to his bedroom. Eddie was on his bed, wearing only his underwear. Deep cuts lacerated his stomach and his legs. He was sobbing but he stopped as soon as he saw Richie.*

*"Richie," he whimpered softly. "Help me."*

*"Eds. Oh my God, Eddie." Richie darted forward and carefully touched his face, pushing his hair back and stroking his cheek. "What happened? Should I take you to the hospital? How? You can't go on my bike like this, Eds."*

*"It's your fault." Eddie leaned into his touch even as he spat out the harsh words.*

*"My fault?" Richie was pretty sure that his heart stopped. It couldn't be his fault. Because this was Eddie and Richie would rather die than—*

*"It's always going to be your fault. I could die of old age and you'd blame it on yourself." Eddie reached out and he grabbed Richie's waist, pulling him closer. Richie didn't resist. He didn't want to resist. Eddie looked so weak and sickly pale and beautiful and... "Beautiful, huh?" Eddie said and he laughed a very un-Eddie laugh. "I'm dying, Richie. Why don't you come with me? We can float together. We'll always be together. Always, Richie Tozier."*

*And Richie had seen the truth. "Eddie wouldn't want me to die with me," he whispered and then Eddie had turned into the clown.*

Richie had gotten away, narrowly avoiding death, but he hadn't gone to the Barrens. He'd wandered around aimlessly for hours in Derry before going home just before dark, exhausted and terrified. He'd slept on the floor for the next five nights.

Richie re-focused on the present and found Eddie leaning against him, hand on his knee, still watching the show. Occasionally he chuckled but he was mostly silent, aside from the slight rattle of his breath.

He didn't even know that he'd said anything until Eddie stared at him.

"What?" Eddie asked, eyes wide.

"W-what?"

"What did you just say?"

Richie paled. Had he really said that out loud? What a *cliché*. "I said —" He was going to make some stupid joke about Eddie's mom but then he decided not to. Because he had to face his fears. "I said that I don't want to lose you. And I mean it. You're my best friend, Eds."

"I thought Bill was your best friend," Eddie said. "You knew him before me."

"The moment he introduced me to you, I knew." And he had. He'd seen Eddie puffing away on his inhaler and he'd known. Fanny pack full of pills and all. "I knew you were going to be my best friend. For life, Eds."

"For life," Eddie agreed.

"Even if I have to kill that fucking clown for you."

"You'd do that for me? I thought you were all about not putting yourself in unnecessary danger."

"Well, I am." Richie winced. He was too deep into this to stop confessing now. But he couldn't tell Eddie. His throat closed up as he tried to speak. Tried to say *I am but for you, I am anything you need me*

*to be. And if you need me to kill the clown...* Instead he just leaned forward and hugged him. It wasn't enough but it had to be, for now.

Richie killed the fucking clown.

They all did. They did it together and It's words echoed in his head *we'll always be together always richie tozier.*

It hadn't been real. Richie was deluded enough to think it was real. But he'd thought about it for weeks. It had been Eddie's voice, Eddie's face. But Richie's thoughts.

Richie saw Bill helping Eddie up, careful of his cast. *Lover.* Normally he'd make fun of him but the title seemed suitable for loving, trusting Eddie. Who was alive. Eddie was alive. And safe. And okay.

Richie, unable to help himself, kissed his best friend.

Bill leapt backwards, taken by surprise at Richie's speed as he smashed his mouth against Eddie's. For all his boasts, this was his first kiss and he wouldn't want it to be with anyone else.

For a second, Richie was terrified because Eddie was stood frozen but then he started kissing back. His good hand was on the back of Richie's neck and he pulled him closer and closer until their bodies were pressed so firmly together that Richie felt like they couldn't be separated. Even when they broke apart, both breathless, Eddie kept his hand on Richie's neck.

"My worst fear was losing you," Richie said quickly. "You wanted to know. It came to me, a few days after school finished. It came to me as you, dying, on my bed, almost naked." He smirked at Eddie's shocked look. "I think it combined my fear of losing you with loving you. It told me that we could be together forever. Well, it said we could float together and I didn't really fancy floating, although I do like the together part."

Bev startled them all with her sudden burst of laughter. "Richie

Tozier, you *sap*!” She exclaimed. “We’re in a sewer after a fight with a monster and you couldn’t wait until we’re above ground to confess your undying love for Eddie?”

“It seemed important about five minutes ago,” Richie grumbled.

“It *is* important,” Eddie said. He stepped away but grabbed Richie’s hand as he did. “Come on, guys. We should go. Who knows how many diseases that clown had.”

“Got them from your mother.”

“Shut *up*, Richie!”